

Battle of Cadinth

By Bill Smith; Illustrations by Chris Moeller

Two years after the Rebel victory over the forest moon of Endor, the battle against the Empire continues. The Rebel Alliance, now known as the New Republic, struggles to bring freedom to the thousand-thousand worlds of the known galaxy. A New Republic task force, returning from several victorious battles on the galactic frontier, has stopped on the starport world of Cadinth to replenish supplies. While the Republic fleet shuttles cargo to the massive orbiting battle cruisers, a lone Republic outpost guards the landing site's western flank against heavily armed, raiding pirates. However, the Republic soldiers are about to find something far more dangerous than a motley band of outlaws...



The wind whipped across the ruined landscape of Cadinth. Republic Lieutenant Brin Stiels pulled his tunic's collar tighter more to suppress the chill that ran down his spine than to shut out the cold. This place reminded him of a battlefield -- or a tomb. Ten hours of bone-chilling wind was enough to test anyone's patience, even the normally quiet Stiels. With less than an hour to go on his duty shift, Brin couldn't wait to crawl into the Rebel SRV-1 that had pulled up a few minutes ago. It might not be comfortable, but it would be warm. After a hot meal, all reminders of the wastelands of Cadinth would be out of his mind.

Below Brin, the next shift of Rebel soldiers milled about. They seemed as unhappy about watch duty as he was. Sure, someone had to guard against the pirates "But why me?" he grumbled to himself.

As Brin's thoughts drifted to the sabacc jackpot he planned on winning that night, he caught sight of something coming up over a nearby rise. "Funny," he thought. "The sensors should have picked up anything that close." A quick scan through his macrobinoculars revealed nothing... but then a glint of metal flashed. Something was moving fast, whatever it was. Then he noticed that there were three somethings coming in fast.

Brin pulled up his comlink. "Republic Core Base, this is Observation Post W-16. I have an unidentified sighting. Requesting verification scan. It's probably pirates trying to penetrate the perimeter..."

Brin's communication was cut off as a blaster bolt smashed the gun turret beneath him. That first shot was enough to penetrate the turrets armor, secondary explosions from inside the turret rocked Brin's position. For a second he thought the tower might topple over. Whatever was firing, it packed a lot of power

Diving for cover, Brin got his first clear look at the droids approaching his position. They looked far more modern than the pirate droids he had encountered three days ago. If he didn't know better, he'd say they might even be prototypes. But no one had the credits for that kind of hardware these days -- except the Empire. As he scrambled to his feet, Brin realized this would be no ordinary skirmish.

The Imperial war droids cleared the rise and opened fire on the Rebel SRV-1 idling nearby. While Republic infantry soldiers ran for cover, the pilots raced to their Defender fighters parked just beyond the gun turret. Before they could make it even halfway, though, a high-pitched whine filled the air. Brin caught a glimpse of several airspeeders in tight formation closing in, yet he didn't recognize them. Later, Republic Intelligence would learn they were newly developed Imperial Sniper airspeeders.

Brin's warning screams were drowned out by the roar of the Snipers' ion afterburners. Concussion missiles vectored in on the Republic Defender fighters, but they barely missed their targets as the Republic pilots activated thrust and maneuvering jets just in time. Curling up into the air, the Defenders tried to get a target-lock on the new Imperial airspeeders and opened fire. The Snipers showed off their agility, easily dodging the awkward shots and firing a second round of missiles. That volley struck home as one of the Defenders exploded, showering the ground troops with hot metal fragments.

As the Imperial war droids advanced on the New Republic troops, Brin forced open the hatch on the back of the turret. Smoke billowed out, and he had to cover his mouth and nose to stifle the smell of burning circuitry. Crawling over the debris, Brin activated the comm panel.

"Republic Core Base, this is Observation Post W-16. Imperial droids and airspeeders are attacking our position. Enemy force strength unknown, Request immediate assistance! Over!"

Ban collapsed to the floor, coughing on the thick, acrid smoke. In the distance, Imperial AT-ATs began targeting the lone, smoldering New Republic gun turret...

Battlefield Assets:

Imperial AP-1-C Attack Droid

Imperial AP-1-C (Armored Platform, model 1, Command) Attack Droids are among the newest combat created units by Arakyd, makers of the infamous Imperial probot. They are deadly against lightly armed infantry troops, thanks to their repeating blaster, but they serve an essential command duty by coordinating the functions of the AP-2 and AP-3 models and by feeding targeting data through a remote computer link with the other units. Any New Republic units that find a way to interfere with the broadcast data-link will have a much higher chance of defeating these units in combat. **System Specs:** Light repeating blaster with backpack power generator, targeting/sensor array, broadcast data-link with other AP-style droids (limited to a range of 400 meters), life-form indicator.



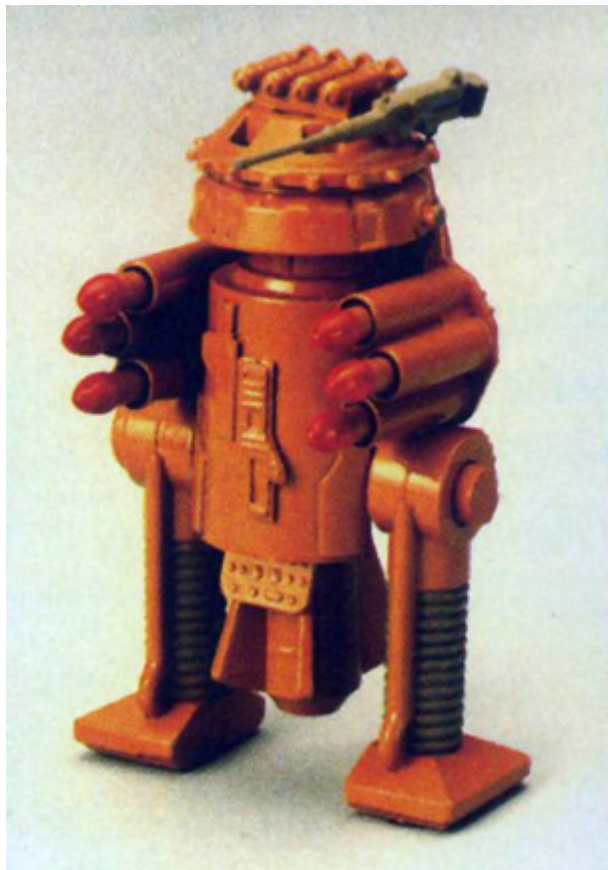
Imperial AP-2 Attack Droid

The AP-2 (Assault Platform-2) Attack Droid is the cornerstone of the Empire's new anti-infantry assault droid team. Equipped with rapid-fire light repeating blasters on a rotating "head turret" and independently rotating heavy blaster rifles, the AP-2 is capable of single-handedly taking on nearly a whole squad of Republic soldiers. A pair of micro-grenade launchers round out the AP-2's weaponry. **System Specs:** Two heavy blaster rifles, blaster pistol, two micro-grenade launchers, broadcast datalink from AP-1-C droid, rapid-fire targeting programming.



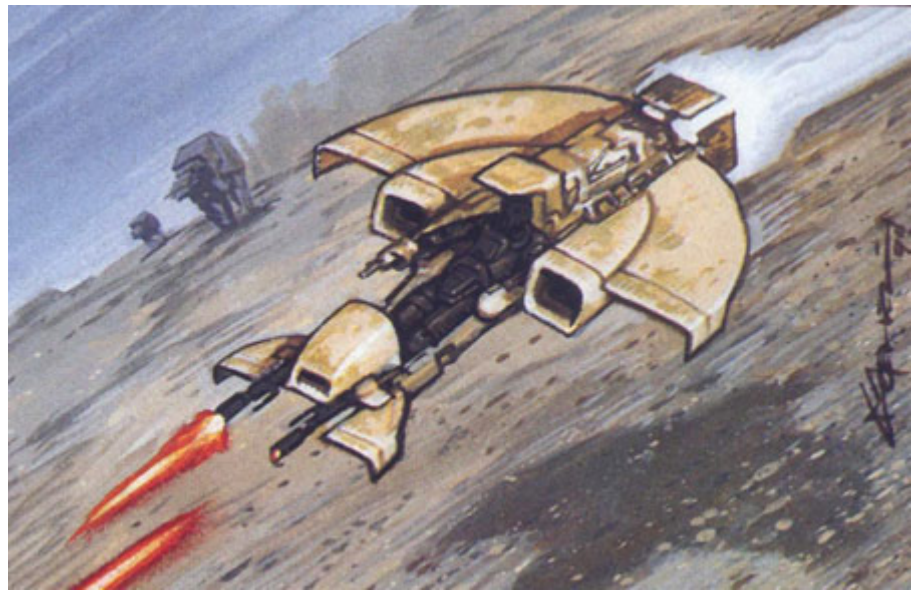
Imperial AP-3 Attack Droid

The Imperial AP-3 (Assault Platform-3) Attack Droid looks like an astromech droid equipped with missile racks. The AP-3 unit traditionally has a rear assault position and uses its rockets micro-proton torpedoes to blast vehicles and large numbers of enemy troops. While it is slow when moving on its wheeled legs, a repulsorlift drive unit at the base of its body allows it to move across the battlefield when summoned by AP-1-C Attack Droids. **System Specs:** Six assault rockets, four micro-proton torpedo launchers, broadcast datalink from AP-1_C droid, repulsorlift generator.



Imperial Sniper Airspeeder

The Sniper airspeeder is a heavily armed cross between a swoop and an airspeeder. While fast and maneuverable, it can barely stand up to small arms fire, much less blasts from speeders and artillery emplacements. The almost disposable Sniper is all engine and weapons. Huge intake scoops emerge from the wing surfaces and feed the immense ion afterburner located directly behind the pilot. Steering vanes at the front of the Sniper are manipulated by the pilot's feet, while the thrust plates around the engine are



controlled by the pilot's left hand. A computer link feeds the pilot a heads-up display on his helmet face plate. The pilot is strapped into a tight-fitting seat and restraint webbing, but the only protection comes from the pilot's flight suit, which has a computerized feedback and oxygen system to prevent pilots from passing out during high-G acrobatic maneuvers. **System Specs:** 600 kmh top speed, twin light blaster cannon, twin medium blaster cannon and light missile launcher.

New Republic Defender Starfighter

The New Republic Defender fills the need for a system space and atmospheric defense starfighter. Before the Rebel Alliance defeated the Empire, its fighter design philosophy emphasized fast ships that could evade Imperial pursuit by jumping into hyperspace. With the New Republic now in control and the Empire playing the role of insurgent, New Republic-member worlds began screaming for a fighter to fend off Imperial raids.



The resulting Defender fighter is slow by modern standards (it's only two-thirds as fast as the A-wing or TIE interceptor), but it is

far faster than the aging Republic Y-wings and Z-95 Headhunters that are usually relegated to planetary defense. To save space and weight, the Defender lacks a hyperdrive. Its extendible S-foil maneuvering struts retract into the spaceframe for non-combat situations; once the enemy has been engaged, the struts swing down and forward, giving the Defender better positioning for maneuvering jet bursts. While sudden maneuvers in an atmosphere risk actually tearing off the struts (due to the G-forces, gravity of the planet itself and atmospheric drag), in space the Defender can literally spin around 180 degrees in mid-flight by firing one maneuvering jet forward and one backward. **System Specs:** Single pilot, three laser cannons.

New Republic SRV-1 (Scout and Retrieval Vehicle)

The SRV-1 is a tracked scouting and armored troop vehicle. While it's a recent addition to the New Republic's arsenal, the SRV-1 is sturdy and dependable instead of innovative. Its performance is comparable to older transports, but it is fairly cheap to build. It has a crew of two with two additional gunners and it can carry up to eight troops or a single piece of equipment weighing up to three metric tons.

The SRV/R-1 (Scout and Retrieval Vehicle/Repulsorlift) is the first variant on the standard ground vehicle. A

standard repulsorlift generator has been added, giving the SRV/R-1 the ability to cross water and other difficult terrain. The trade-offs are numerous: the SRV/R-1 is significantly more expensive and can carry only two tons of equipment (although it can still handle up to eight soldiers). But the most damaging flaw is that the power generator is insufficient to power both the repulsorlift drive and the blaster cannon at the same time. Therefore, when confronted with a hostile situation, the SRV/R-1 must either stand and fight, or flee without the chance to return fire.



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